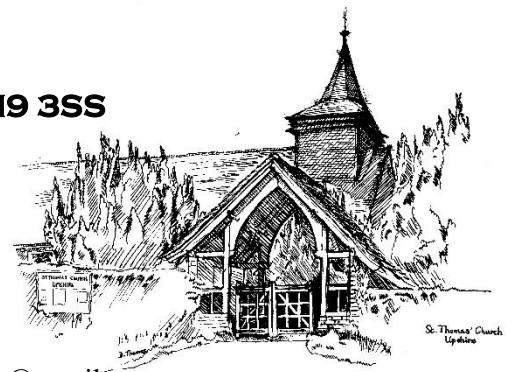


# ST THOMAS' CHURCH, UPSHIRE EN9 3SS

## NEWSLETTER

### *February 2025*



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This Newsletter is free: donations to Lyn Wackett. Copy date for March Newsletter: 14<sup>th</sup> February

We are committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. The PCC has adopted the Church of England's policies and best practice on safeguarding which may be found on the Church of England website and also on the Diocese of Chelmsford website.

#### SERVICES AND DIARY FOR FEBRUARY

Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup>	3.00-4.00pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church	
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Presentation of Christ in the Temple 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Malachi 3:1-5	Luke 2:22-40
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday before Lent Readings: Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-end)	Luke 5:1-11
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday before Lent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Jeremiah 17:5-10	Luke 6:17-26
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Second Sunday before Lent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Genesis 2:4b-9, 15-end	Luke 8:22-25
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> March	3.00-4.00pm SEEDLINGS meet in the church	
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March	Sunday next before Lent 9.15am HOLY COMMUNION Readings: Exodus 34:29-end	Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

Our mailing list to receive the electronic version is now in excess of 100 participants so if you are not one of those and wish to be included please send your email address to Kate at [dalek16@btinternet.com](mailto:dalek16@btinternet.com) or phone 02085083942. We are looking to reduce our 'paper footprint' for climate change by printing fewer copies – your contribution will help. Thank you.

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

You are invited to offer names to be added to our prayer diary to remember those who are unwell or unhappy. First names only are required as God will know who we are praying for.

Contact Lyn Wackett on 01992 711573 or email [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk)

This month we pray for Laura, Alan & Pam, Lesley, Charlie & John, Anne, Pam & John, Barbara, Vernon, Mal, Louise, Sue, Ann & Cyril, Rosalind, Doreen, Maureen, Carol & George, Beverly, Terry, Jackie, Andrea & her Mum & Dad, Nina, Carmel & the Price family, Dave, Pat, Nigel, Lola, Pearl, Susan & Alan, Jackie & Linda, Eleanor, Peter, Graham, Brenda, Adrian, Joan, Christine, Chris, Izzie & Pennie.

#### NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Thank you to the people who have sent in articles to be included in the Newsletter. Please keep them coming! Anything: maybe a poem you have written, what you have been doing in the garden, childhood memories, something that happened to make you smile, it all makes for interesting reading.

### **THE VICAR WRITES:**

Though I know one should not show favouritism, there are some bible stories that I love and return to over and over again. One of these is to be found in the 4th chapter of John's Gospel and tells the story of Jesus' encounter with a woman at a well.

Though on the face of it, it may seem an unremarkable encounter, similar I'm sure to many Jesus would have as he travelled here and there preaching and teaching, there is so much more to it than that. The story not only highlights the compassion of Jesus but also serves as a powerful reminder of the grace that is extended to each of us, regardless of our past.

A weary Jesus stops at Jacob's well in Samaria. It is noon, a time when most women would avoid drawing water due to the overwhelming heat. Yet, here comes a Samaritan woman, an outsider in many ways—both ethnically and morally. She approaches the well, likely burdened by her own past, carrying the weight of shame and isolation.

In defiance of the social norms of the time, Jesus starts a conversation with her and asks for a drink. This moment is transformative not just for the woman but for all who hear her story. Jesus speaks to her not with condemnation but with curiosity and grace, offering her "living water" that will quench her spiritual thirst forever.

As their conversation unfolds, Jesus reveals intimate details about her life, things that a stranger should not have known. This revelation could have been a moment of condemnation, but instead, it becomes a moment of liberation. By exposing her reality, Jesus invites her to confront her past and embrace a new identity.

This encounter exemplifies the heart of Jesus' ministry: to seek and save the lost and to offer hope where there seems to be none. The woman realises that Jesus sees her not just as a sinner but as a beloved child of God, deserving of love and redemption.

Transformed by this encounter, the woman rushes back to her village to share what's happened to her. "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did," she exclaims (John 4:29). Her testimony inspires others to come and meet Jesus for themselves, leading many to believe in Him as the Messiah.

This shift from isolation to community is profound. The woman, once defined and isolated by her past, runs into the heart of the community to share the good news of salvation. In this act, we see how Jesus can change any situation and, in this case, how he turns shame into a joyful story of grace.

I think this is why I love this story so much. For it reminds us that no one is beyond the reach of God's love. Regardless of our past, Jesus invites us into a relationship where we can find forgiveness and purpose.

It is also a reminder to us that in our own communities, we are called to extend the same grace that Jesus offered. We are encouraged to create spaces where others feel seen and valued, where stories of transformation can be shared without fear of judgment. Just as the woman at the well became a catalyst for change in her village, so too can we be people of hope and reconciliation in our world. For the story of the Woman at the Well is not just her story; it is our story—a narrative of grace, redemption, and the power of encountering Christ.

Team Vicar St Thomas, Upshire and Holy Innocents, High Beech

Benefice Youth Missioner

MB 07960 604416

### **Church Flowers**

Each month we can create memorial dedications, wedding, anniversary or special occasion flowers - Contact Kate Dale email: [dalek16@btinternet.com](mailto:dalek16@btinternet.com) or 02085083942



## **ST THOMAS' SEEDLINGS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturdays of each month (unless otherwise stated)**

A free Stay and Play church group for children and those who care for them

Join us Saturdays 3-4pm for messy craft, play, songs and stories along with a welcome cuppa

St Thomas' Church, Horseshoe Hill, Upshire, EN9 3SS



**ANAGRAM** Unscramble this 11 letter anagram: SENTCORONER. The answer will be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

St Thomas Church, Upshire Bank details

St Thomas Church Upshire PCC

HSBC Bank

Sort Code 40 45 20

Account number 00724505

Any queries regarding setting up a Standing Order, giving a donation to the church, Gift Aid or about joining the Parish Giving Scheme please contact our Treasurer, Ruth Moore on 07852 668633

[Ruth4366@gmail.com](mailto:Ruth4366@gmail.com)

If you are able to Gift Aid donations this increases your gift without any extra cost to yourself.

### **WALTHAM ABBEY CHURCH**

**Music for Lunch** – Saturdays at 12 noon. Refreshments available from 11.30am. Free admission with retiring collection.

## ST THOMAS' CHURCH COMMUNITY LUNCHES 2025

Wednesdays, 11.30 for 12noon-2pm

19<sup>th</sup> February, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 16<sup>th</sup> April, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 20<sup>th</sup> August  
17<sup>th</sup> September, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 19<sup>th</sup> November, 3<sup>rd</sup> December

Please book your place to confirm attendance: 07899 846711

If after booking you are unable to come, please phone to cancel, we can then offer a place to people on the waiting list.

### GROWER'S CORNER FEBRUARY 2025

It's hard to believe that Spring is around the corner but there are glimmers with day length increasing. Soon snowdrops and crocuses will be making their first appearance and this will certainly bring me cheer. My birthday also falls in February, so it's my excuse to ensure I stick to my New Year's resolution. I get to choose a garden to visit. Best get my thinking cap on but we are heading to the Cotswolds for a couple of days.

Update on the plots:

We have started the big job of clearing the new plot. It's our chance to put our stamp on , also to make changes to make better use of the space. We have decided that the shed is in the wrong place and it will need moving. It is a big task but it will create the space for a fruit cage. (Yippee). The polytunnel has seen better days. So we will need to make the repairs to the frame and probably re-cover it in time. This polytunnel will be a dedicated space just for tomatoes. Dad helped us repair the polytunnel on our first plot, so we can use his design to make a new door and opening window (he will be chuffed with that).

Unfortunately, it seems that the whole plot has been covered in plastic sheeting. I know many people use it but I struggle to find the benefits. It degrades and contaminates the soil and it becomes matted with weeds. Going forward, we are following Charles Dowding principles of 'no dig'. Cardboard goes down first followed by a thick layer of mulch.

We are also trying to either reuse items we find or re-home things we do not need. Including plastic compost bins and plastic tubing.

Currently we are harvesting some lettuce, chard and kale from the polytunnel. Beetroot and wallflowers are slowly growing too. The garlic and onion we planted in the raised beds are showing signs of growth. The mint we have in a small raised bed is romping away, and needs cutting back. The hellebores are flowering and they look very pretty.

Jobs to do:

**Winter pruning:** Apple trees it is now best time of year whilst the trees are in their winter dormancy. The sap and minerals has gone down into the trees and there is lower risk of disease and infection. By pruning you can create the shape for the tree, remove diseased and dying branches. Cut back inward and crosses branches, cut at an angle above a leaf node to reduce height so leaves do not block out fruiting buds.

**Prune roses:** January and February when the roses are at their most dormant. Pruning during this period ensures your roses are shaped for the year ahead, promoting fresh growth and blooms in the summer months. It also helps create a healthy, attractive plant with good structure and coverage, setting the stage for peak performance. When pruning, focus on removing unhealthy stems by identifying the 'four Ds' – dead, dying, damaged, and diseased growth. Clearing away any remaining foliage is equally important, as it can harbour disease spores that may challenge your plant in the coming year. (Advice taken from David Austin).

**Chit potato tubers.** Chitting potatoes means encouraging the tuber to produce strong, short, stubby green shoots before planting. It is the practise of making potatoes start to sprout before planting in the soil. Chitting is supposed to help a crop mature quickly after planting. It is important with earlies, and a good idea with maincrops, to 'chit' the seed potatoes before planting.

**Check your bird baths** are topped up and clean

February sowing ideas: Edibles

- Rocket: very cold tolerate. not just for salads. Great in risottos too.
- Cut and come again lettuce. Loose head lettuce. Germinates in cold weather.
- Mitsuna: can be used stir-fries, as wilted greens or salads.
- Chervil: quick to germinate. Great in salads.
- Spinach: lovely as wilted greens with a touch a garlic.

All of the above can be grown in unheated greenhouse. If sown outdoors will need to cover with cloche or similar. Happy gardening. Love Louise.

**STAMPS** Please continue to save your postage stamps and foreign or out of circulation coins as the charities we support can use them to raise funds. At present we collect the coins for Essex and Herts Air Ambulance and The British Legion and stamps for British Heart Foundation. Stamps and coins can be left with Lyn & Dave at 94 Upshire Road – please leave in the porch if no reply. Please leave about ½“ of envelope around the stamps. Thank you.

ANAGRAM The answer to the anagram is CORNERSTONE

### Upshire Mothers' Union

In December we held our Communion and Carol service, thank you Revd Jane, followed by tea and festive treats in the church. Thank you to all who came along to joined us for an enjoyable afternoon.

Mothers' Union have always looked to support emergency aid and relief, and know it plays a crucial role in disaster response, but it is complex, expensive and needs to be well coordinated. As a result, specialised international organisations and agencies, such as the Red Cross, are often best placed to deliver effective and timely responses. However, increasing attention is being given to the role of **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** because, although it is not always possible to reduce the scale, intensity or frequency of a natural hazard, it often is possible to reduce the devastating effect it can have on the people it impacts.

DRR has been recognised by the UN and other leading development agencies as being fundamental to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals. These are 17 goals that 193 world leaders committed to back in 2015 in order to achieve the following by 2030: ending extreme poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and fixing climate change. Unlike emergency aid and relief, DRR is a longer-term intervention that is best delivered at community level, by grassroots organisations that are embedded in the community. Therefore local Mothers' Union groups have a vital role to play in building resilience and helping communities to adapt to the increased threat of natural hazards. Due to the high levels of trust Mothers' Union members have built over time, they are uniquely placed to work hand-in-hand with communities to understand the short and long-term risks presented by natural hazards and to work collaboratively to identify ways in which communities can respond. Emergency responses are short-term solutions that address the immediate aftermath of a disaster, but Mothers' Union is there before the disaster hits and remains long after relief efforts have finished, in order to help rebuild communities and protect them from future disasters through DRR.

There is no Meeting in February.

### UPSHIRE SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB

Held in Upshire Village Hall, Mondays 2.00-4.30pm, Tuesdays 7.00-9.30pm No experience necessary.

Tuition and bowls available. It's fun to play! Contact Fred on 01992 711720 or Jean on 07733 084815.

### WALTHAM ABBEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monthly talks on Friday evenings at 7.30pm at the Baptist Church, Paradise Road, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1RL.

Visitors welcome, donation of £2 per person requested.

21<sup>st</sup> February: **The Fosse Way** – a journey along the Fosse Way from Exeter and Axmouth to Lincoln, examining the history of the 214 mile Roman road, why it was built so straight and how the Romans surveyed and constructed it. Including some digressions to look at Boudicca, Roman mileposts, the Lincoln imp and Lancaster bombers. Speaker: Richard Thomas.

21<sup>st</sup> March: **The Puddephatt Lecture** – William Burges and the 1860s restoration of Waltham Abbey Church;

Speaker Grenville Weltch

(Grenville's new book about this, which is published with the support of the Essex Heritage Trust, will be on sale at the meeting)

### 50/50 CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of the 50/50 Club Bumper Draw in December who were:

1 <sup>st</sup> :	£40	No. 44	Sue Rumble of Waltham Abbey
2 <sup>nd</sup> :	£30	No. 58	Beverly Turner of North Weald
3 <sup>rd</sup> :	£25	No. 20	Phyllis Huxter of Claverhambury
4 <sup>th</sup> :	£20	No. 8	Val Maidment of Waltham Abbey
5 <sup>th</sup> :	£20	No. 75	Barbara Fowler of Upshire

Our thanks to the generous people who donated their winnings back to St Thomas' Church.

It is now time to begin Draw 15 of St Thomas' 50/50 Club.

There will still be monthly draws and the entry fee is £12.00 every six months (or £2 for every month of membership). Each member is entitled to a maximum of two entries, couples can have four. Please complete the form below and return it to me; payment by Bank Transfer is preferred or alternatively you may pay by cheque or cash to the address stated. Please let me know if you pay by Bank Transfer so I can include your number in the Draw (email [lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:lynanddavewackett@hotmail.co.uk) or phone 01992 711573).

Our thanks to all our members for their support of St Thomas' Church. Good luck to everyone who enters.

### **St Thomas' Church 50/50 Club Draw 15**

**January to June 2025**

I wish to become a member of St Thomas' 50/50 Club and have paid by Bank Transfer to HSBC Bank, A/c St Thomas Church Upshire PCC, Sort Code 404520, A/c No: 00724505.

**OR** I enclose cash/cheque of £12 per entry (maximum 2 per person). Please make cheques payable to St Thomas' Church Upshire PCC and return your entries to Lyn Wackett, 94 Upshire Road, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3PA.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Telephone: .....

## WALTHAM ABBEY FLOWER CLUB 2024

We meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday in the month except January, June, August and December at Waltham Abbey Community Centre, Crooked Mile, EN9 1QD. Door open 1.45 for 2pm start. All are welcome, raffle, sales table, tea, coffee and homemade cake. Further details from Chris on 07792 594443.

**25<sup>th</sup> February:** Eleanor Bracken demonstrating flower arrangements with at least 5 designs to be raffled.

All welcome: members £4, visitors £8 includes refreshments.

**25<sup>th</sup> March:** workshop for people to have a go themselves, Irene will tell what is needed at the February meeting; £3 members, £7 visitors, details as above.

## **Rocky Racoon**

*Now somewhere in the black mining hills of Dakota there lived a young boy named Rocky Raccoon.* So sung the Beatles on their album 'The Beatles' more usually known as the 'White Album.' So why 'Rocky Racoon'? Well, the song does have a slightly tenuous connection to the Church of Holy Cross and St Lawrence in Waltham Abbey, but more of that later! In a recent National Churches Newsletter mention was made of a guided tour of the Abbey church that sadly I missed which was a shame as I would have gladly attended especially as Juliet Peace, the daughter of the engraver of two of the windows in the Church also was in attendance. The National Churches Trust is committed to ensuring that church buildings across the UK are well maintained, open to everyone, sustainable and valued. To do this the Trust provides grants to repair, renovate and improve the structure and fabric of churches of all denominations throughout the UK and one way the Trust raises funds to achieve this is to organise visits to churches such as the tour of the Abbey church.

Juliet's father was David Peace who in 1935 along with two other men revived the craft of glass engraving in Britain. The other two men were William Wilson, who was in the glass business, and Laurence Whistler, brother of Rex Whistler. It is not known whether the three men actually knew each other so it is a bit of a coincidence that they all engaged in glass engraving at the same time. David's daytime job, though, was as a conservation planner but during evenings he taught himself the art of engraving. He obviously achieved a very high standard as apart from the engravings in the Abbey church he also has work displayed in churches as far afield as Cornwall, Liverpool, Cambridge, Southwell, Westminster and Norwich.

The two windows in the Abbey church are both set seven feet up in the walls and are memorials to worshippers at the church who also served as churchwardens. Portraying well known verses from the bible, one is taken from Matthew 11 verse 28: 'come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden and I will refresh you'. The other is taken from John 3 verse 16 and is why there is a tenuous connection to the Rocky Raccoon song.

The song is set in the wild west of America, and it tells of Rocky's girl who had gone away with a rival of Rocky. Being the wild west Rocky is intent on revenge and a duel is held where Rocky comes off worse. According to the song *...Rocky fell back in his room only to find Gideon's Bible, Gideon checked out, and he left it, no doubt to help with good Rocky's revival...* The Gideons International is the result of a meeting between two men who wished to band commercial travellers together for evangelism. What began in 1908 as an Association of Christian businessmen placing Bibles in hotel rooms has evolved into an expanding mission to provide Scriptures to all people in nearly every facet of life. The book is small and features only the New Testament and Psalms on paper that is extremely thin! But it is ideal for slipping into one's pocket. The book starts with ideas on how to use the bible and has suggested readings for situations that one might encounter in one's life and also suggestions for daily readings. On page thirteen, though, it refers to what it describes as the best known verse in the bible that has been translated into more than 2,300 languages and dialects, and which is what is engraved so beautifully on the other window in the Abbey church: *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.* And just in case you're wondering what happened to Rocky, the Doctor attending him said "you met your match", and Rocky said, "Doc, it's only a scratch, and I'll be better, I'll be better, Doc, as soon as I am able" Adrian J Liddle

## **A letter from Blythwood Care**

Dear Friends,

Thank you very much for your kind support for Blythwood Care's 2024 Shoe Box Appeal. Thanks to the generosity of people like you, more than 85,000 gift-wrapped and gift-filled shoeboxes have been sent to people in need across eight Eastern European countries.

It's been nearly three years since war broke out in Ukraine. There is a lot of sorrow, much fatigue, so many losses. We continue to pray that God will turn this war to peace. This winter, more than a third of Blythwood's boxes went to Ukraine, with five lorry-loads totalling over 31,000 boxes going to Ternopil, Kyiv, Uzhhorod and Odesa.

Blythwood's Chief Executive, Jeremy Ross visited Ukraine in December. He says:

*"The village of Partyzans'ke was occupied by Russians for several months. Less than 40 miles from currently-occupied territory, there were shells in the road and homes were destroyed. Russians could come again. We delivered shoeboxes to families who had returned. It's hard to imagine what the children there feel when they walk through their bullet-holed gates."*

Jeremy expresses his gratitude for the great support for our 2024 Shoe Box Appeal when times are tough for many:

*"At a time when many families are struggling to pay the bills at home, it's testimony to how generous people can be to those in greater need. I want to thank everyone who filled a box and everyone who helped with the process. Your kindness really does make a difference to people living in hardship."*

It's my privilege to be able to thank you for your kindness on behalf of Blythwood Care, but thank you especially on behalf of those you might never meet or see, but whose lives will be made better thanks to your support for our Shoe Box Appeal.

Wishing you all the very best for 2025.